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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: OPRC KMDR KPAO PHUM PREL KJUS CI
SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION -LUCIA PINOCHET

¶1. On January 28-31 Santiago dailies had extensive coverage of Lucia Pinochet's decision to withdraw her request for political asylum in the United States. A significant part of that coverage focused on describing the Arlington detention center in which Pinochet was detained and highlighting that she received no special treatment. Dailies also inferred that the reason for Pinochet's decision to withdraw her request was precisely being treated as a "common prisoner." The description of the center and treatment did not cast the U.S. in a negative light. Only "La Tercera" (1/29) gave a different angle by stating that the decision to revoke Lucia Pinochet's visa had been a USG "political decision." January 31 dailies quote Lucia Pinochet's friend Giorgio Agostini saying that Pinochet's asylum request stemmed from a suggestion by U.S. immigration officials. There has been no editorial comment.

¶2. January 28, conservative, influential "El Mercurio" (circ. 116,807): After a two-day detention in U.S. territory, Lucia Pinochet withdrew her request for political asylum.... In the afternoon, Pinochet was transferred from an Arlington detention center to testify before a Federal court judge. According to wire stories, she was handcuffed.

Conservative, influential "El Mercurio" (circ. 116,807): General Pinochet's eldest child was not granted special privileges in the Arlington Detention Center.

January 29, conservative, influential "El Mercurio" (circ. 116,807): The U.S. decision to revoke Lucia Pinochet's visa will complicate her future entry into the U.S.--one of her favorite destinations and a place in which she has commercial interests.

¶3. On January 28, conservative, independent "La Tercera" (circ. 102,000): Lucia Pinochet decides to return after a two-day stay in an Arlington prison, where she slept in a five-square-meter cell and was placed with other inmates.

Conservative, independent "La Tercera" (circ. 102,000): During her stay at the Arlington Detention Center, a model prison, Lucia Pinochet received the same treatment as other inmates. Upon arriving to the center, she was medically examined and given prison garb.

On January 29, conservative, independent "La Tercera" (circ. 102,000): Lucia Pinochet said her stay in the Arlington prison had been a "nightmare." She had had to use the same uniform as other inmates and was handcuffed when transferred to the immigration court.

Conservative, independent "La Tercera" (circ. 102,000): Upon arriving in the United States, Lucia Pinochet learned from Homeland Security agents that her visa had been revoked and she could not enter the U.S. This was a political decision of the Bush administration. A day and several contacts with U.S Ambassador Craig Kelly had to transpire for the government of Chile to understand that Lucia Pinochet's asylum petition must be resolved in

accordance with U.S immigration law, placing the problem in the judicial arena.

¶4. On January 30, conservative, afternoon "La Segunda" (circ. 31,834); conservative, independent "La Tercera" (circ. 102,000; 1/31); leading-popular "Las Ultimas Noticias" (circ. 136,377; 1/31): Psychologist Giorgio Agostini visited Lucia Pinochet before she was freed on bail. Agostini, a close friend of Pinochet's, said she claimed U.S. immigration officials had suggested her asylum request.

¶5. On January 31, all dailies: Lucia Pinochet was freed after paying a USD 6,000 bail. Pinochet was notified of the charges against her during her detention in the military's Infantry School.

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